

NEPA Next 50: Reflections on the National Environmental Policy Act Federal Agency Dialogue on Engagement and Consultation

Day 1: Engaging Stakeholders and the Public in the NEPA Process

October 20th, 2021, 2:00pm – 4:30pm Eastern

[Click here to register for Day 1](#)

This forum will be held virtually. Please register using link above.

Agenda

Event Overview

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law on January 1, 1970, establishing a national policy for environmental protection and becoming a cornerstone of environmental legislation in the United States. Fifty years later, NEPA remains one of the most consequential environmental laws in the Nation's history and a standard for assessing impacts and engaging stakeholders and the public in major Federal actions.

While NEPA remains fundamentally similar today compared to when it was signed into law, it has not been immune to change. Over the years, shifting national priorities brought on by changing societal and environmental conditions have led to an evolution of NEPA strategies and approaches. Yet, as the Federal approach to NEPA implementation has evolved, certain elements remain cornerstones of the NEPA environmental review process, including interagency coordination, stakeholder engagement, Tribal engagement, and public involvement. Today, Federal agencies continue to work to improve upon these collaborative aspects of the NEPA process to better enhance project outcomes, strengthen relationships, protect public interests, and ensure efficient use of Federal resources.

To support Federal agencies' efforts to enhance collaboration, coordination, and engagement in NEPA processes, the John S. McCain III National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution (National Center) is partnering with the University of Arizona's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy (Udall Center) to convene two virtual learning forums to understand how Federal agencies are adapting to evolving trends and continue to effectively collaborate with Tribes, partners, and the public in the context of NEPA implementation. These forums will provide a space for Federal agency representatives to reflect on their experiences with NEPA successes and shortcomings, and to explore activities and trends that will propel NEPA into the future.

The National Center is a program of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation, an independent, nonpartisan Federal agency of the Executive Branch.

Day 1: Engaging Stakeholders and the Public in the NEPA Process

October 20th from 2:00pm – 4:30pm Eastern

Overview: A learning forum for Federal agencies to share best practices and lessons learned, and to discuss trends relating to public and stakeholder engagement in the NEPA process.

Objectives:

- Share engagement and collaboration best practices and lessons learned;
- Discuss how agencies are adapting to changing trends in the NEPA landscape;
- Discuss how agencies are adapting to the virtual landscape and how advancements in technology are changing the future of NEPA engagement;
- Identify opportunities for improved engagement practices.

<i>Time (ET)</i>	<i>Topic</i>
2:00	Welcome and Forum Overview <i>Objective: Welcome participants, set-up Day 1, and get to know participants</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome – <i>David Brown, Ph.D., Udall Foundation; Andrea Gerlak, Ph.D., Udall Center</i>• Day 1 Overview and Agenda Review – <i>Brian Manwaring, Udall Foundation</i>
2:20	Keynote Speaker <i>Objective: Provide historic context, current outlook, and recent trends in NEPA engagement practices, setting a backdrop to explore NEPA's legacy and future possibilities.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brenda Mallory, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality
2:45	NEPA Survey Findings and Participant Interaction <i>Objective: Review findings from a recent NEPA engagement survey. Group reflection on survey results, keynote address, and exchange key issues and challenges.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEPA Survey Findings – <i>Aaron Lien, Ph.D., Udall Center</i>• Facilitated participant engagement – <i>Alyssa Bonini and Mitch Chrismier, Udall Foundation</i>
3:00	Break

3:10	<p>Expert Panel Discussion: The future direction of NEPA stakeholder and public engagement</p> <p><i>Objective: Explore a variety of NEPA stakeholder and public engagement best practices, issues and challenges from different agency perspectives.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panelists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jennifer Bosyk, Chief, Branch of Environmental Coordination, Division of Environmental Assessment/Office of Environmental Programs, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management ○ Stan Buzzelle, Attorney Advisor, Office of Environmental Justice, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ○ Megan Cogburn, Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of Project Development & Environmental Review, Federal Highway Administration ○ Matthew McCombs, District Ranger, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, Gunnison Ranger District, USDA Forest Service • Moderator – <i>Brian Manwaring, Udall Foundation</i> • Q&A/Discussion
4:15	<p>Reflection on Proceedings</p> <p><i>Objective: Summarize key themes and findings from the keynote speaker and panel discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Boling, Perkins Coie LLP
4:25	<p>Wrap up and Next Steps</p> <p><i>Objective: Adjourn and discuss next steps.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss next steps, including Day 2 proceedings
4:30	<p>Adjourn</p>